

Response for Sid Salter

The Clarion-Ledger

February 16, 2003

Governor vs. Lawmakers?

Only two legislators were mentioned – Flaggs and Holland – no pro-Barbour legislators. The article mentions: “the JLBC said the program... must be downsized...” which is stronger language than the Governor has used.

“Cuts”?

“Controlling pharmaceutical costs, patient and provider education, and disease management” are not cuts. The C-L has already reported the facts of “Operation: Streamline” but only “controlling pharmaceutical costs” is mentioned in this piece. The Governor has also been quoted as saying he would like to review eligibility. “Reviewing eligibility” does not mean cutting needy recipients.

+\$100 million

Governor Barbour accepts the LBO recommendation except in a handful of areas. One of those is adding \$100 million to Medicaid next fiscal year over what they recommended. In addition, he wants \$130 million in additional efficiencies from Medicaid.

Response Opportunity?

The only question posed to the Governor’s Office was: “Are there any additional specifics available on what the Governor is going to do with Medicaid?” The answer was that the Administration was still reviewing options and working with the CMS, but the reporter obviously did not even read the original budget document -- “Operation: Streamline.” There were many assertions in the piece but only one limited question posed to the Governor’s Office.

Disease Management

The only mention of disease management was in Dr. Okoye’s quote. During the campaign, and since the formation of the administration, Governor Barbour has been a leading champion of being more vigorous in disease management – but that is not even mentioned as a strategy. (Also noted in “Operation: Streamline”)

CHIPS/Quote

The Governor has not mentioned the CHIP program during his Administration -- only Medicaid in general which also covers children --

yet the pull-out quote on the front page is from an opponent who says: "I would not advise the governor to touch the coverage for the children." This is both inaccurate and slanted.

Context

The entire context of this article is toward more funding for Medicaid with no questions asked about any room for improvements or efficiencies. No discussion of potential efficiencies; no discussion of possible eligibility problems – just additional funding only. This piece was completely one-sided.